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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a broad overview of the concepts of uniformity and diversity as issues in the development of public education systems in industrialized nations. First, the historical emergence of these issues is discussed. Various approaches to the two issues since the 19th century are summarized and reviewed, and efforts to develop appropriate curricula are highlighted. Next, several contemporary views are analyzed, including those of Adler's "Paideia Proposal" and Goodlad's "A Study of Schooling." Finally, educational systems and curricula currently in place in Israel, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, and the United States are discussed and used as the basis of a more general analysis of the two key terms. (KH)

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Uniformity and Diversity: Curricular and Instructional Issues

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Universal elementary schooling began in the nineteenth century and was almost fully implemented in most industrial nations by the end of World War I. Secondary schooling became almost universal in those nations after World War II. The common school was extended to include both elementary and secondary schooling. By the late 1960's, higher education had grown exponentially and universal tertiary or post-secondary education was being considered under the rubrics of "higher education" and "recurrent or lifelong education."

In this continuing drive toward what has become known as the "democratization of education," a number of issues have arisen with the concepts of uniformity and diversity being especially prominent. Just as the twin concepts of equality and excellence have posed challenges to educators and policy makers, in various ways the concepts of uniformity and diversity have raise issues with regard to all aspects of education--goals, curriculum, instructional strategies, staff deployment, resource allocation, organization, evaluation, etc.. Just as the twin goals of equity and excellence are both deemed desirable, uniformity and diversity are both considered desirable even though they are often in conflict with one another.

The push for universal schooling has not only brought under the

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school roof an increasingly diverse population but the nature and range of the diversity itself has increased. As schools have become more inclusive, their selective and elitist nature has diminuished and the range of individual differences which educators believe affect learning has become more diversified. Moreover, the purposes and goals of education have become more diverse and comprehensive at the same time.

Immigration and migration on a massive scale, especially since World War II, have contributed to this learner diversity. The United States has always been a "nation of immigrants" and while the flow of immigrants has varied from period to period, it has never stopped. In the past few decades, particular national, ethnic and cultural groups have swelled the immigrant ranks and filled the classrooms, swelling the language and cultural diversity. In addition to the continuing flow of immigrants, massive population shifts from rural to urban areas, from urban to suburban areas, from the south to the northeast and west, from the snowbelt to the sunbelt, have all brought more heterogeneous and diverse populations into what were once considered relatively homogeneous neighborhoods and schools.

Few nations have grappled with problems of educating and acculturating a diverse population as has Israel with its ingathering of people from more than one hundred nations since its founding three dozen years ago. Not only were there language differences but tremendous cultural differences as well amongst those who made aliyah. In a sense, the only common element amongst the millions who came to Israel was that they were Jewish. The schools were charged with educating children and youth

from families ranging from very primitive to very sophisticated societies. The Ashkenazi-Sephardic dichotomy was so oversimplified as to become almost meaningless. And, if one adds Arabs to educational dimension, the diversity with which Israel's educational system must cope is further extended and complicated.

The Western European nations which comprise the OECD and the Council of Europe have experienced a continuing flow of migrants and immigrants which began with refugees following World War II and has continued with the so-called "guest workers" and their families. Linguistic and cultural minorities have become sizeable groups in schools throughout Western Europe and Great Britain. The Council of Europe's School Education Division advocates "interculturalism or intercultural education" as the basic concept to guide teachers and schools in working with migrant children as well as those from the receiving country." The group's chairman observes that: "an intercultural education that allows for differences and is receptive to different values seems to us not only a necessity, since it is the only kind of education that can meet the needs of Europe today and tomorrow in a world where interchange, mobility and interdependence are on the increase, but also extremely positive and fruitful."[1]

In 1948, Australia modified its relatively exclusionist policy towards non-British people and accepted some 170,000 European refugees during the next three years, mainly from Poland and the Baltic states. This was followed by significant numbers of Dutch, Germans, Italians and Maltese in the 1950s and early 1960s; Greeks and Yugoslavs during the 1960s and early 1970s; and some 40 or more countries all told. Most recently, Australia has accepted almost 40,000 Indo-Chinese refugees in addition to

its annual quota of new arrivals. By 1981, about one quarter of the Australian population was born elsewhere and to this figure 150,000 Aborigines must be added. As Taft and Cahill have pointed out: "the nationalities and languages of immigrants [to Australia] arriving in any year are heterogeneous and are constantly changing....according to conditions in the countries of origin;" that immigrants "tend to live in groups in specific districts of the main urban areas, but mobility is quick and most new immigrants move on within a few years to areas of second and third settlement;" and that the large Roman Catholic immigrant groups tend to enroll their children in fee-paying Catholic schools from the time of their arrival.[2]

The phenomena of immigration and migration which exist in practically every industrialized nation contribute to the different levels of literacy of various cultural and linguistic minorities, adding to the individual differences naturally present. The diversity poses issues between uniformity and common goals and programs and differentiated goals and programs.

Through the nineteenth century in the United States, curricula tended to be fairly restricted and common with such differentiation as took place essentially designed to deal with the needs of so-called rapid and slow learners. As early as 1868, the St. Louis Public Schools provided for rapid promotion through the grades for rapid learners. In 1893, a committee was appointed to study the high school curriculum and to respond to the demands for more uniformity in college admissions. The Committee of Ten, as the group became known, dealt with two major issues:

Should the modern academic subjects be acceptable for college admission? Should the high school offer different curricula to students who were college-bound and those who were not? The Committee report proposed four alternative programs--classical, Latin-scientific, modern languages and English. Subject experts in nine areas spelled out what was to be taught, when to begin, how often and for how long. The Committee declared flatly that the preparation of a small percentage of graduates for college admissions was not the principal purpose of the public high schools, that the program must be designed primarily for the majority of students for whom education was to be terminal with the high school, but that preparation for college was really the best preparation for life. The report concluded that "every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination to the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease."[3] Moreover, the Committee argued that if the schools were to be supported by taxes, there was no justification in giving a very good education to some of the students and something less good to the rest.

A quarter of a century later. the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued a report titled, The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education which argued that secondary education "should be determined by the needs of society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available."[4] The Commission detailed changes in society (as citizen, as worker, and as independent personality, the individual required a

higher degree of intelligence and efficiency); changes in the secondary school population (aside from the sharp numerical increase with the high school population doubling every decade since 1890, the students differed in "widely varying capacities, aptitudes, social heredity, and destinies in life"), and changes in educational theory and practice (knowledge about individual differences in capacities and aptitudes, reexamination of the subjects and methodologies as related to "general discipline," and concern with the application of knowledge).

As Diane Ravitch has observed:

> ...the report of the Committee of Ten was out of joint with the times. The influx of millions of immigrants put new strains on the schools, especially in the cities. The fear that Anglo-Saxon America was in danger of being overrun by culturally backward and genetically inferior peoples was frequently expressed. The nation's gravest social problems, in the eyes of most contemporary observers, was how to assimilate these illiterate hordes. Fitting them for American life meant teaching them how to do useful work, showing them how to keep clean, and preparing them for the demands of everyday life.[5]

The Commission's report stated that education had to fill two functions: one of specialization "whereby individuals may become effective in various vocations and other fields of human endeavor," and the other of unification, the attainment "of those common ideas, common ideals, and common modes of thought, feeling, and action that make for cooperation, social cohesion, and social solidarity."[6] The report asserted that every subject taught in the high school should be reviewed in terms of its contribution to the utilitarian objectives. R. Freeman Butts has pointed out that the report shifted:

> the emphasis in schooling away from preoccupation with the academic and intellectual disciplines and [broadened] the social role of education almost beyond recognition. The "constants" were now to

> be thought of in terms of the common social needs and activities required of all individuals rather than subject matter to be mastered; the variations and electives appropriate to differing individuals could be served in connection with vocation and leisure.[7]

What followed was a proliferation of courses and curricula which were intended to better meet the needs of individuals-- basic mathematics or general mathematics for the non-academic student; algebra for the academic. Applied courses, vocational courses, general courses for some students; traditional academic subjects for others. The tracks or special curricula-- college preparatory, vocational, and general, with all of the various subsets--came into being even moreso than earlier. The Cardinal Principles of Education recommended differentiated curricula, such as business, agriculture, clerical, industrial and college-preparatory.

Contrasting the report of the Committee of Ten with that of the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education, Cremin has observed:

> Formerly, when the content and purpose of secondary education had been fairly well defined, equal opportunity meant the right of all who might profit from secondary education as so defined to enjoy its benefits. Now, the "given" of the equation was no longer the school with its content and purposes but the children with their backgrounds and needs. Equal opportunity now meant simply the right of all who came to be offered something of value, and it was the school's obligation to offer it. The magnitude of this shift cannot be overestimated; it was truly Copernican in character.[8]

In 1926, a Consultative Committee issued what became known as the Hadow Report titled, Education of the Adolescent. The Committee proposed that secondary education not be restricted to some 10 percent of the youth population but that secondary education be provided for all children between the ages of eleven and fourteen. At age 11, based on an examination which came to be known as the "eleven plus," children would leave primary school for another type of school presumably suited to

their individual needs and attainments. The Hadow Committee saw three types of children for which three types of post-primary or secondary schools would be needed. The first was to be called the grammar school which would consist of all academic-type schools in which the students would "pursue in the main a predominantly literary or scientific curriculum." The second school-type was to be called the "modern school" which, as the report put it, should give "at least a four-years course from the age of eleven plus, with a 'realistic' or practical trend for the last two years." Finally, there should be junior technical or trade schools which "should be developed so far as possible in accordance with the needs and requirements of certain local industries."[9] The Norwood Report on Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools issued in 1943 examined the nature of secondary education and concluded that there were three types of pupils, distinguished by particular types of minds, requiring corresponding types of programs.[10]

The Education Act of 1944 which established the basis for a comprehensive educational system for the first time contained provisions for a tripartite system--different schools with different purposes and goals, curricula and examination for each type of pupil. In the intervening years, comprehensive schools have emerged, the eleven-plus selection process has all but disappeared, new examinations have been introduced and other dramatic changes have occurred but the Hadow-Norwood concept of three types of minds has been a difficult legacy to shake off.

By the 1950's, immigration of families from various former Commonwealth nations--Cypress, Pakistan, India, Kenya, West Indies and others--dramatically altered the relative cultural and racial homogeneity of the English schools in ways that raised new issues of uniformity and

diversity. Socioeconomic, class and caste differences were not the only differences with which educational planners and policy makers had to deal.

What are some of the issues? While they will be presented and discussed briefly in terms of the United States experience, they could just as well be discussed from other national and cultural viewpoints.

A prime issue has to do with educational goals and purposes. Which educational goals are common and uniform and which are different and special? For many years, the basic goals of American education were seen as the "Americanization" of immigrants and the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy. Beyond this, the schools were to "develop individual potential to its fullest," whatever that meant since the interpretation of individual differences and individual potential have varied widely.

In The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto, Adler argued:

> In Democracy and Education, written in 1916, [John Dewey] first tied the two words together and let each shine light upon the other.
>
> A revolutionary message of that book was that a democratic society must provide equal educational opportunity not only by giving to all its children the same quantity of public education--the same number of years in school--but also by making sure to give to all of them, all with no exceptions, the same quality of education.[11]

To provide the same quality of schooling, Adler argues, requires that there be the same objectives for all without exception and "requires a program of study that is both liberal and general, and that is, in several, crucial, overarching respects, one and the same for every child."[12] Adler's position is quite clear: the goals of education are the same for all, the curriculum should be the same for all, kindergarten through grade 12, with the only differentiation provided in the pedagogical strategies

employed to implement the common curriculum.

The contrary position is that expressed in the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education--secondary education must fill two functions, one of specialization and one of unification, and there are two sets of goals. Thus, while there maye be a common curriculum required for all to fulfill the unificatior goals, there must be a range of options and electives to fill the specialization goals of education.

A closely related issue is found in the question of whether different students have different access to knowledge through different curricula to which they are exposed. As Fenstermacher as observed:

> People differ. Almost no one disputes this point. What provokes disagreement is how people differ and what, if anything, should be done about their differences. In the field of education it is generally believed some differences among learners are so important that they justify differences in what is taught and how. Precisely what these important individual differences are is not always clear, nor is it in most cases obvious what specific curricular or instructional variations ought to follow from important individual differences.[13]

Fenstermacher asserts that the consequences of accomodating individual difference by different curricula variations are enormous:

> Using individual differences in aptitude, ability or interest as the basis for curricular variation denies students equal access to the knowledge and understanding available to humankind. Students grouped as slow learners and later tracked into vocational programs often are effectively barred from the literature, history, fine arts, and science--and the training in intellectual skills accompanying these disciplines--believed most likely to free their minds from convention, dogma, and cliche. Students grouped as fast, highly motivated learners and later tracked into college preparatory programs usually are prevented from developing the practical skills and traits of character typically associated with good work at a trade or craft. No theory of education known to us permits such selective access to knowledge and ideas based upon individual differences in aptitude, ability or interest. Of course, it is possible that some students may not benefit equally from unrestricted access to knowledge, but this fact does not entitle us to control access in ways that effectively prohibit all students from encountering what Dewey called "the funded capital of civilization."[14]

Thus, issues of uniformity and diversity of curriculum are linked to questions about equal access to knowledge and to the widespread practices of tracking and grouping. Adler views a multitrack system as "an abominable discrimination" aiming at different goals for different groups of children. In proposing the same goals and the same curriculum for all, Adler would have students complete "this required course of study with a satisfactory standard of accomplishment regardless of native ability, temperamental bent, or conscious preferences."[15] He would, of course, administer such a program "sensitively and flexibly in ways that accord with whatever differences must be taken into account."[16]

From his Study of Schooling, Goodlad concluded that:

> our 38 schools received children differentially ready for learning, educated them differentially in their classrooms, and graduated them differentially prepared for further education, employment, and presumably vocational and social mobility. The 17,163 students in our sample had quite different opportunities to gain access to knowledge during their years of schooling. At least some of these differences in opportunity to learn, it appears, were differentially associated with economic status and racial identification.[17]

Goodlad would eliminate tracking and suggests as an alternative "mastery learning which emphasizes a combination of large-group instruction and small-group peer tutoring" in the elementary and junior high schools. At the secondary level, Goodlad recommends "a common core of studies from which students cannot escape through electives, even though the proposed elective purport to be in the same domain of knowledge," elimination of grouping students in separate classes on the basis of past performance, random assignment of students to heterogeneous classess--all aimed at "offering the most equity with respect to gaining access to knowledge while still preserving the more advantageous content and teaching

practices of the upper tracks."[18] What is needed, Goodlad concludes, is improved pedagogy and instruction, not differentiated tracks and curricula. Convincingly as Goodlad argues, the issues are unresolved. Does equal access to knowledge provide equal knowledge and equality of educational opportunity? Does equality mean identity? If tracking and grouping are an "abominable discrimination," will their elimination provide equal quality education for all?

Popkewitz illustrates another aspect of the complexity of responding to individual differences by looking at what he calls the school's missionary role to correct social and economic inequalities in the larger society:

> Schools are conceived as objective institutions that organize, select and evaluate children according to individual ability. The belief in equal opportunity, however, is confronted by a social situation in which there are different strata. Each has different cultural and social resources, not all of which are deemed appropriate for success at school. Special enrichment and compensatory programs, for example, are developed to provide the poor with the attitudes, sensitivities, skills, and behaviors typically found in children of other social, cultural, and economic groups. Commitment to equal treatmeny of individuals and commitment to redress social and economic inequities produce a tension: treat everyone alike but differently.[19]

Are the concepts of compensatory and remedial education and of educational enrichment invalid? By providing youngsters with different curricula and instruction designed to enable them to participate more effectively in schooling are educators really providing inferior educational opportunities and limiting educational mobility? Is "the best education for the best the best education for all, as Hutchins proclaimed? Even Adler admits that "schooling cannot do the job it should equally well for all children if some are adequately prepared for school and some are not"

and he would accept "at least one year-- or better, two or three years-- of preschool tutelage... for those who do not get such preparation from favorable environments."[20] With respect to the so-called disadvantaged, gifted and handicapped populations, issues of uniformity and diversity are especially prominent. Are we condemning large numbers of youngsters to second class programs by providing them with compensatory, remedial and enrichment programs? Or are we making it possible for them to enter the mainstream and to profit from available educational opportunities by providing these differentiated curricula and instruction?

In the past two decades concurrent with the development of compensatory programs and provisions, there has been a growth in concern for cultural pluralism and bilingualism in school programs. Cultural pluralism and bilingualism concerns were manifested in connection with the compensatory education efforts. Cultural pluralism stressed both uniformity and diversity. Bilingual education stressed diversity but aimed at more uniform goals. The federal government funded an intensive curriculum development and teacher training effort titled "The Ethnic Heritage Program" aimed at developing materials and teaching strategies for nurturing ethnicity, including both differences and commonalities among different ethnic and cultural groups.

The Council of Europe has been concerned for more than a dozen years with the education and cultural development of migrant youth, believing that the schools and other institutions must "place value on [the migrant child's] identity and mother tongue as a necessary condition for his proper development."[21] The official policy of the German Federal

Länder, for example, recommended as official policy:

> The aim is to enable foreign schoolchildren to learn the German language and obtain German school qualification as well as to maintain and develop their knowledge of their native language. At the same time educational activities are intended to contribute to the social integration of foreign children for the period of their stay in the Federal Republic of Germany. They should also serve to maintain their linguistic and cultural identity.[22]

While the aim is to facilitate school and social integration and acculturation, the nurturing of native language and cultural identity are parallel aims which call for both uniformity and diversity.

In Sweden which has similar goals for its immigrant children, instruction is organized in one of four kinds of classes: ordinary classes, in which students leave temporarily for native language instruction and/or supportive teaching; integrated classes, consisting of a group of Swedish-speaking pupils and a group of another native language with a considerable amount of instruction being given in the native (non-Swedish) language; home language classes, consisting of pupils sharing a language other than Swedish with practically all instruction in the mother tongue and Swedish taught as a foreign language; and preparatory classes, a temporary arrangement comprised of pupils from more than one language group with instruction in Swedish and the mother tongue. Bilingualism and biculturalism are seen as central aims of education since, as the policy statement puts it, "the migrants' children must be able to understand both their country of origin and the host country."[23]

A recent report in the United States urged that the federal government clearly assert that the development of English literacy is the most important objective of common schooling and that fiscal support for bilingual education be used to teach non-English speaking children how to speak, read

and write English.[24] In the United States, very often multicultural education has come to mean studying one's own culture rather than using multicultural studies as a common focus for all students. Should there be culturally pluralistic studies common and uniform for all or shouls there be diversity in cultural studies with each group focuing on its own culture. Does the response to that question differ when talking about different age levels or different cultural patterns?

Issues of uniformity and diversity have continued to be raised with respect to vocational education. These issues range from the argument that the differentiated curricula provided vocational education student results in their being given a second-class education (in line with the equal access to knowledge argument mentioned earlier, depriving them of the common cultural heritage and limiting opportunities for the development of their cognitive abilities) to the differentials in access to vocational programs. For instance, in Germany, only one out of seven young migrants participates in vocational education as compared with one out of every two native Germans. The low participation of the immigrants is due to their failure to acquire a school-leaving certificate and their inadequate knowledge of German. Young male migrants have a fifty percent better chance of undergoing vocational training than do young female migrants.

Several of the recent national reports have decried vocational education and recommended its elimination. Boyer, for example, views the most serious problem of vocational education is that it short-changes vocational education students academically and restricts their options for the future. Most of these reports argue that a common core curriculum with

few elective and options. A core curriculum focusing on a "sound liberal education" is viewed as the best vocational education by some reformers. The question is whether a common core curriculum is appropriate for all students, regardless of whether secondary education is to be terminal for some? How should diverse interests, motivations, abilities, and skills be treated with respect to common and differentiated curriculum?

Differential academic achievement and school paths between males and females raise questions about curricular uniformity and diversity. In the United States, the areas of mathematics and science are of particular concern to policy makers with differential achievement and differential choice of mathematics and science-related careers raising questions about uniformity and diversity in educational programs. There are some who argue that the availability of curricular choice is at least partly responsible for this sex differential with females enabled to opt out of advanced programs. Others argue that what is needed are differentiated programs to overcome the male-female differences. How significant is gender in curriculum differentiation? How much should gender be taken into account in curricular and instructional planning?

Similarly, recent research concerning brain hemisphericity has raised questions regarding curriculum differentiation based on what is known about left- and right-brain functioning. Is this still another dimension which should influence curriculum differentiation? There is a growing body of literature on student learning styles which suggests that the student's learning preference affects learning success. It is generally recognized and accepted that students vary on a variety of dimensions which affect and influence how and under what conditions they learn. Student

performance depends on the interaction of a variety of factors, including the student's own characteristics and those of the learning environment itself. After reviewing the psychological literature on individual differences in the classroom, Good and Stipek found "no single form of instructional treatment powerful enough to accomodate all the ways individuals may differ, nor do they find any one kind of individual difference that positively requires a specific instructional treatment."[25]

The issues and questions concerning uniformity and diversity, like those of equity and excellence, produce a tension which is aggravated by our inability or unwillingness to differentiate the educational purposes and programs of the school from those of various non-school educative agencies such as the family, the media, the work place, and other agencies and institutions.

The exponential developments with respect to computer technology in achool, at home, and in industry and laboratory also raise questions about uniformity and diversity. In the United States, it is estimated that for every school-based computer there are at least ten home-based computers. The proliferation of computers has widened the gap between the hayes and the haye-nots. Is computer literacy--a term which is defined in a variety of ways--a basic skill which all students should require like reading and mathematics? Is it a basic skill which requres uniform basic/minimal competency or uniformity? What dimensions of diversity should be encouraged or tolerated?

Heterogeneity and diversity characterize modern nations and societies but paralleling these are commonalities and strands of homogeneity.

Diversity and commonality is reflected in the schools as well. They impact on decisions concerning the curriculum and instruction, necessary and appropriate to educate and acculturate the heterogeneous populations which schools serve.

These questions concerning uniformity and diversity are closely linked to questions of equity and excellence. In striving to attain the twin goals of equity and excellence, curricular and instructional uniformity and diversity are needed. When uniformity and common curriculum are appropriate and when diversity and differentiated curriculum and instruction are appropriate raises question which do not respond to either-or solutions. Basic philosophical positions affect decision-making and doctrinaire decisions are not likely to move schools and school systems toward resolution of questions concerning curriculum and instruction. How to blend uniqueness, individuality, and differences with commonalities, group and societal needs without subordinating one to the other is the continuing quest of the curriculum developer in selection of content, instructional strategies, resources, and evaluation procedures.

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